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## **Senate calls for Baldwin prison to be first facility used when more prison beds needed**

**LANSING** – The Michigan Department of Corrections would be required to use the recently-vacated Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin first in the event the department has more prisoners than beds under legislation approved by the Michigan Senate Wednesday, said Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau.

McManus sponsored an amendment that would require the department to use existing vacant prison beds located at the facility before increasing the capacity of existing prisons or reopening previously closed prison beds.

“The governor’s decision to close the Michigan Youth Correctional facility has left Baldwin with no economic base, and left this state-of-the-art facility – built just six years ago to the specifications of the state – empty,” said McManus. “I think the state owes it to this community to say that if we need more bed-space for prisoners, Baldwin is the first place we look.”

The closure of the Baldwin prison has left the community worse off today than it was before the state brought the facility there, according to testimony before the Senate Appropriations Judiciary and Corrections Subcommittee Wednesday. The committee heard from McManus as well as Deborah Smith-Olsen, president of the Lake-Osceola State Bank, on the closure’s impact on the community.

“The community and our local businesses invested heavily in improvements to accommodate the new prison when it came to Baldwin because we were told the state was in it for the long-haul,” said Smith-Olsen. “Now, after just six years, we are left with mounting debt for huge infrastructure improvements that don’t even function properly now that the prison is empty.”

The subcommittee also heard from representatives of the Michigan Department of Corrections and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

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